

## **INSTRUMENT 2**

### **COMPONENTS STUDY OF REAL ESSENTIALS: TOPIC GUIDE FOR YOUTH FOCUS GROUP**

## Components Study of REAL Essentials: Topic guide for youth focus group

### INTRODUCTION TO THE FOCUS GROUP (5 minutes)

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us. As you know, we are from Mathematica, an independent research firm. My name is [NAME OF FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR]. This is [NAME OF NOTE TAKER]. We are part of an independent research team working on the Core Components study of the REAL Essentials program (REA). This study aims to identify the components that matter most for promoting positive health behaviors among youth and is being conducted by the Office of Population Affairs.

We are here today to learn more about your experiences with REAL Essentials. Your point of view as students participating in the program is extremely valuable. Our conversation today will take about 90 minutes. We will record and take notes during our conversation. This will help us remember what you say correctly. The recording will be erased after we have completed writing up our notes. If anyone would prefer that we not record our conversation, we will not record it.

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**Privacy Statement:** We will keep the information you share with us private. We will only use first names as we talk today. We will not ask for or write down your names; and if we use quotes from this discussion, we will not include the name of the person who made the statement. No one but the researchers will see any of the notes from our discussion.

We are also talking to other youth participating in REAL Essentials. We will take our notes from our conversation today and combine it with information from our other conversations with participants like you. This will help understand how REAL Essentials is working and what youth like you think about it.

Please keep in mind:

- There are no right or wrong answers to our questions. Our questions are designed to learn about your experiences with REAL Essentials and what you think about it.
- Being part of our discussion is completely voluntary. You do not need to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.
- There are no penalties or consequences for not answering our questions.
- Please do not use your own or each other's full names. Please just use first names.
- Please remember to be respectful of everyone's opinions, even if they are different from your own.
- Please do not talk about your own personal behaviors with the group today, although we welcome your thoughts about the program itself.
- Please do not share what we discuss today outside of this room. Please respect one another's privacy. We cannot, however, guarantee that all group participants will honor this request.
- Again, remember, your participation in this conversation is up to you. You do not have to participate and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.
- Would anyone like to add any additional ground rules for our discussion?

**Assent** (*10 minutes*)

I would now like to go over the assent process with you. Assent is when we explain the following topics to you:

- The purpose of this study
- The way our discussion today will work
- How we will use the notes we will take during our conversation today before you agree to participate, and
- Information about your rights and the risks for you.

**INTERVIEWERS SHOULD CONDUCT ASSENT PROCESS (VERBAL ASSENT WILL BE USED IF VIRTUAL)**

- Pass out two copies of the assent form to each youth.
- Read assent form aloud and ask youth if they have any questions.
- Answer all questions.

- Ask youth to sign it, give you one copy and keep one copy for themselves

**Topics for discussion (60-75 minutes)**

- A. Icebreakers
- B. Program components
  - 1. Overall curriculum
    - Perception of the curriculum's purpose or goal
  - 2. Content
    - Examples of meaningful topics that were discussed and resonated with youth
    - How the topics and/or activities may have influenced youth attitudes or intentions related to relationships
    - How they used the information and skills they learned outside of the classroom
    - Topics that youth wished the curriculum covered or that they could learn more about
  - 3. Facilitation
    - Perception of the way the facilitator(s) presented topics and activities
    - Perception of co-facilitation and impact on implementation (if applicable)
    - Ability of facilitator(s) to answer questions from youth
    - Ability of facilitator(s) to engage or motivate youth to participate
    - Perception of facilitator/youth alliance
    - Perception of facilitator passion for the curriculum material
    - Other aspects of facilitator(s) that may have resonated with youth (background, personal connection, etc.)
    - Perceptions of role of classroom teacher during program delivery
- C. Implementation component
  - 1. Youth participation and engagement
    - Common reasons for missed lessons (if any)
    - Youth participation in activities
    - Reasons for not participating in any activities
    - Topics or activities in which youth were more/less engaged or interested
    - Other factors that influenced youth participation or engagement
  - 2. Program delivery
    - Perception of how program was delivered
  - 3. Curriculum materials
    - Perception of videos, handouts, and other materials provided to youth
- D. Contextual components
  - 1. Youth values and challenges related to relationships
    - What youth value in peer and romantic relationships
    - Challenges faced by youth in relationships
  - 2. School/community context
    - Sense of need for relationship education in school or community
    - Additional services that youth want or need
  - 3. Other programs
    - Experience with a program like Real Essentials Advance (REA)
    - Current participation in another program that covers the same or similar topics as REA
- E. Lessons learned
  - 1. Successes, challenges, and lessons learned
    - What about the program worked well and did not work well
    - How the program could be improved for future groups of youth